

Teatro della Pergola and various other theaters as a stage technician until 1835. From there he accepted a job as a scenic designer and stage technician at the Teatro Tacon in Havana, Cuba.

Fascinated by technical research of any kind, Meucci read every scientific missive he could acquire. He spent a great deal of his spare time in Havana on research and he soon gained notoriety for his creative and productive mind. His purported inventions included a new method of galvanizing metal, which was applied to military equipment for the Cuban government. He continued his work in the theater, but science had become his indomitable passion.

One day, in his home, Meucci heard an exclamation of a friend, who was in another room of the house, over a piece of copper wire running between them. He realized immediately that he had something that was more important than any discovery he had ever made. With that realization also came the understanding that to succeed as an inventor, he would need an environment that truly fostered his inquisitive mind and vibrant spirit. He would come to America, to explore this new communication possibility.

He left Cuba for New York in 1850, settling in the Clifton section of Staten Island, a few miles from New York City. Though poor finances and limited English plagued Meucci, he worked tirelessly in his endeavor to bring long distance communication to a practical stage.

In 1855, when his wife became partially paralyzed, Meucci set up a telephone system which joined several rooms of his house with his workshop in another building nearby. This was the first such installation anywhere. In 1860, when the instrument had become practical, Meucci organized a demonstration to attract financial backing in which a singer's voice was clearly heard by spectators a considerable distance away. A description of the apparatus was soon published in one of New York's Italian newspapers and the report with a model of the invention were taken to Italy with the goal of arranging production there. Unfortunately, the promises of financial support, which were so forthcoming after the original demonstration, never materialized.

Antonio Meucci refused to let this set back destroy his vision. Though the years that followed brought increasing poverty, he continued to produce new designs and specifications. Unable to raise the sum for a definitive patent, Meucci filed a caveat, or notice of intent, that was a preliminary description of his invention with the U.S. Patent Office. His telegrafo was registered on December 28, 1871 with the requirement that he file for converting it into a patent in 1874. Fate would deal Meucci a cruel blow, however, as he fell victim to a near fatal boat explosion. While he lay in hospital, destitute and ill, Meucci allowed the provisional patent to lapse.

Two years after the expiration of Meucci's caveat, Bell took out a patent for his voice transmitting electrical device, which he called the telephone. It is possible that sometimes several inventors have the same idea at the same time. In this case, however, what has mattered is not who had the idea for the telephone first, but who first turned the idea into a viable commercial enterprise. As we all know, it was Bell who succeeded in that respect.

For too long Antonio Meucci has been only a footnote in our history books. At many local libraries, a search for Meucci in the card catalogue yields nothing. His legacy deserves more. Remember that a federal court in the 1880's found that Meucci's ideas were significant to the invention of the telephone and the Secretary of State at the time issued a public statement that "there exists sufficient proof to give priority to Meucci in the invention of the telephone."

Mr. Speaker, many people from many different nations have contributed to the greatness of America. Antonio Meucci was indeed one such person. He is an example of someone who worked for the benefit of all. It is fitting that his efforts are recognized here today.

#### IN HONOR OF TOM SHORT

#### HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 15, 2000*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, President Thomas Short of IATSE, the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees, ranks as one of the City of Cleveland's favorite sons. Cleveland is proud of his strong, disciplined, patient leadership which has earned him the gratitude of the rank and file of the IATSE, the appreciation of all international labor leaders, and the respect of those who sit across the table from his I/A team.

As a member of the labor committee of the United States Congress and as a member belonging to IATSE Local 660 (when you are in politics it is always good to have another trade) I know first hand the powerful and positive impact Tom Short has had in protecting and advancing the economical, social, and political rights of working men and women. President Short achieves success for his members through making the use of principle, a practical and pragmatic goal.

As a veteran of both labor and politics, I am aware of the challenges which confront my brothers and sisters in the entertainment world. Surely this, the most dynamic of all industries, with so many exceptional individuals blessed with depth of talent and breadth of vision—surely you can call upon the limitless reservation of spiritual and creative energies always available to you, to design an environment of benevolence and co-operation where all are winners in the collective bargaining process.

Over thirty years ago, when I began my career in public service, I worked closely with Tom Short's father, Adrian, who led Cleveland's stage hand union. Adrian Short introduced me back then to his sons, Dale, a labor leader in his own right, and Tom, our honoree.

How very proud your father would be of this well deserved moment of grace, Tom, for you embody every dream he had—in your quest to elevate the dignity of all working people.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELP  
KEEP THE CAPITOL FUNCTIONING II

#### HON. JOHN EDWARD PORTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 15, 2000*

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, on October 24, I rose to thank all of the people that make this great institution work. I wish I could have mentioned all of our extended support staff by name. Peggy Sampson has been with the Republican staff almost as long as I've been in Congress. She does a fantastic job playing Mother Superior to all our pages, watching over them, helping to educate them, and generally herding them. This has become an infinitely more complex job when Republicans became the House majority, with the right to name so many more pages on our side. But Peggy not only does her job and does it in exemplary fashion, but she also helps the cloakroom staff in so many ways. She has been and is absolutely invaluable and irreplaceable. I also want to mention the garage attendants who are so friendly and helpful to all of us: Tommy, Dennis, Scotty and so many others are always there on the job and make our tour here safer and more enjoyable.

#### TRIBUTE TO FATHER JAMES E. HOFF

#### HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 15, 2000*

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Father James Hoff, a friend, educator and community leader, who will step down from his service as President of Xavier University on December 31, 2000.

Over the past ten years, Father Hoff has led Xavier to great new heights. In 1992, he began Xavier 2000 which led to the Century Campaign, the most ambitious fundraising campaign in the school's history, raising the endowment from \$24 million to \$89 million. He has also significantly strengthened the university's curriculum, advanced the quality of its faculty and created a more unified, attractive campus.

Perhaps most telling of Father Hoff's work is the success of Xavier's students. In the 1990's, the average high-school grade-point average of its incoming students rose from 2.9 to 3.49 for the current class. And, in 1998, the school ranked first in the nation for student-athlete graduation rates (100 percent).

In 1995, Xavier was recognized for the first time by U.S. News and World Report as one of "America's Best Colleges," placing fifteenth among Midwest schools. In its 2001 ranking, Xavier climbed to seventh among regional institutions in the Midwest. Xavier has also received recognition from Money magazine and the John Templeton Honor Roll.

Although Father Hoff surely deserves much of the credit, he is modest and quick to recognize Xavier's faculty and staff, Board of Trustees, administration and students—all of whom have helped to raise the level of excellence at the school.

He says his greatest accomplishment during his tenure is defining the school's mission: "to